



# Michigan Business Aviation Association

**Testimony of  
Cheryl Bush,  
Past-Chair of the Michigan Business Aviation Association**

**Before the  
House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee  
April 2013**

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Chairman Schmidt and other members of this honorable committee, my name is Cheryl Bush, and I am a member of the Michigan Business Aviation Association (MBAA) and served as Chair from 2007 to 2011. I am grateful for the opportunity to appear before you today and appreciate you holding this important hearing on aviation funding.

We appreciate your work to improve Michigan's transportation system, which contributes to economic growth and job creation. In these challenging times, a safe and efficient transportation system is critical in our everyday lives.

As background, MBAA was founded 15 years ago with the purpose of furthering efforts to maintain and improve airport infrastructure throughout Michigan. One of our primary goals is to find a permanent funding source for Michigan's airport infrastructure that will ensure Michigan continues to offer first-rate air transportation services to residents and job providers.

We represent business and general aviation airplane owners and operators, businesses, suppliers, aircraft repair stations, charter companies, manufacturers, universities and aviation enthusiasts throughout the State of Michigan. Our members have one thing in common: they depend on general aviation aircraft to meet some of their most difficult transportation challenges to remain competitive in a global economy.

## **You might ask, what is Business Aviation?**

Business Aviation is the use of any general aviation aircraft - piston or turbine - for a business purpose. Business aviation comprises 85 percent of general aviation activity. With Michigan's borders being predominately water, business aviation takes on an even more critical role in our economy.

Most people understand that aviation provides jobs for pilots, mechanics, air traffic controllers and people involved in the manufacturing and maintenance of airplanes. However, aviation also creates good jobs in insurance, education, fuel distribution, financing, advertising, catering, legal consulting and many others. These jobs are directly tied to aviation too.

## **Why is Business Aviation Essential to our Economy and Transportation Systems?**

- We are the only industry that exports more than it imports
- Business Aviation provides good jobs.
- There are more than 235 public use airports in Michigan. Business Aviation serves as a lifeline for communities with declining airline service.
- Michigan has 17,500 pilots, 70 flight schools and 7,000 general aviation aircraft.
- Aviation contributes more than \$19 billion annually to Michigan's economy. 1 million = about 2 billion annually in economic activity.
- Michigan ranks 5<sup>th</sup> in the nation in the number of registered business aircraft.
- Business Aviation is typically a first responder to national emergencies and provides humanitarian relief throughout the world.

On behalf of MBAA, we commend Chairman Schmidt for taking the lead on aviation funding. We support House Bills 4571 and 4572 which will, if enacted, provide a stable funding source for aviation infrastructure projects as defined by MDOT and the Aeronautics Commission throughout the state.

Additionally, it is appropriate that these bills propose using tax dollars generated by owners, operators and users of general aviation aircraft to improve the safety, efficiency and preservation of the state's aviation infrastructure. Without a source of funding identified for the future, there could be a significant reduction in aviation services in our communities and a degradation of facilities and equipment at our local airports. This certainly does not support Michigan businesses that want to grow nor is it an incentive to bring new business to Michigan.

*Remember...One mile of road takes you one mile; one mile of rail takes you one mile; one mile of runway takes you to the world!*

We ask for your support of these two bills which together will go a long way in reinstating the funding mechanism needed to protect the future of aviation in our great state. Thank you very much for listening.